2. There is a full-fledged Regional Research Laboratory at Bhopal to specifically assist in the exploitation of the natural resources of the State of Madhya Pradesh.

3. It has been decided, as a policy measure, not to establish any new field centre, but utilize the existing ones for meeting the additional requirements.

Merger of Ministry of Food Processing Industries with Ministry of Food

2369. SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration for the merger of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries with the Ministry of Food, if so, the reasons therefor; and

(b) when the merger is likely to take place?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Legislation on Deep Sea Fishing

2370. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item which appeared in the Economic Time dated 6th February, 1992 captioned "Deep sea fishing legislation soon";

(b) whether country's marine shrimp resources are over-exploited;

(c) the number of deep sea shrimp vessels in Indian waters at present;

(d) the number of deep sea shrimp fishing vessels lying idle due to over fishing;

(e) the steps being taken to protect existing Indian fleet; and

(f) whether Government are permitting foreign companies to being multi-purpose fishing vessels?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Reports from various experts committees indicate that there is no further scope to increase the production of marine shrimp.

(c) and (d) There are 179 deep sea fishing vessels (20 mtrs. and above overall length) owned by Indian companies. Most of these vessels are capable of conducting bottom trawlering for exploitation of coastal shrimp. There is no specific intimation regarding deep sea shrimp fishing vessels lying idle due to over fishing. In view of (b) above, the deep sea fishing operators are encouraged for diversified fishing for exploitation of non-shrimp resources.

(e) The exploitation of marine resources in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone by foreign fishing vessels are regulated in accordance with the Maritime Zone of India (Regulation of Foreign Fishing Vessels) Act, 1981 and Rules framed there under. The Coast Guards is entrusted with the responsibility of checking the poaching foreign fishing vessels in Indian EEZ.

(f) Indian entrepreneurs are permitted to collaborate with foreign fishing companies for deep sea fishing in Indian waters and to introduce resource specific vessels in Indian EEZ.